

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SD National Guard fielding new MEDEVAC helicopters

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard is fielding new HH-60M Black Hawk helicopters at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City.

The SDARNG has received its first two of six aircraft which will replace its current inventory of six UH-60 A/L model Black Hawk helicopters. The new aircraft will provide an increased operational capability to support state and federal missions.

The HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter, the U.S. Army's newest MEDEVAC (medical evacuation) helicopter, is designed to support the U.S. Army's vision of saving lives on the battlefield. The SDARNG is receiving the new helicopters as part of the U.S. Army's aircraft modernization program.

"It's great to have this aircraft because of its increased capabilities," said Maj. Jon Murphy, state army aviation officer. "We are replacing our older UH-60 A/L model aircraft with the new HH-60M model, and it brings a lot to South Dakota for state missions and emergency response."

Built on the attributes of its predecessor, the HH-60M incorporates advanced technological improvements that include: improved engines with increased power; an improved and more efficient rotor system, which increase lift by 800 pounds; nose-mounted thermal imaging for search and rescue; and an all digital avionics suite with a moving map, flight management system, glass cockpit with color displays, storm scope and radio systems.

Additionally, the advanced avionics suite allows for missions to be conducted in degraded weather conditions safely.

"The increased capabilities of the avionics package – with a fully coupled auto pilot – reduces the fatigue of the pilots flying the aircraft, allows us to safely fly in severe weather and provides increased situational awareness of what's around with the moving map displays," said Murphy.

The helicopters also feature a built-in medical interior, which includes an integrated litter system capable of handling up to six patients and an integrated oxygen generating system for onboard patient care.

The HH-60M's ability to mount an external fuel system adds an additional 400 gallons of fuel and increases its range by an additional hour and a half, allowing crews to respond to emergencies throughout the state without the concern of fuel stops.

While the Black Hawks are primarily used for troop medical evacuation, they can also be used to support aerial reconnaissance, search and rescue and wildland fire suppression missions.

“The newer airframe will also allow for decreased maintenance time and increase the overall availability of aircraft for state missions due to built-in improvements,” said Murphy.

The aircraft fielding is expected to be completed by April. During this transition, the older UH-60 A/L aircraft will be turned in and fielded to other National Guard states.

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High resolution photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard



141029-Z-CW157-123: A new South Dakota Army National Guard HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter hovers before landing at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, S.D., Oct. 29, 2014. The SDARNG has received its first two of six aircraft which will replace its current inventory of six UH-60 A/L model Black Hawk helicopters. The new aircraft will provide an increased operational capability to support state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen/Released)



141029-Z-CW157-213: A new South Dakota Army National Guard HH-60M Black Hawk helicopter sits in a hanger at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, S.D., Oct. 29, 2014. The SDARNG has received its first two of six aircraft which will replace its current inventory of six UH-60 A/L model Black Hawk helicopters. The new aircraft will provide an increased operational capability to support state and federal missions. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Tangen/Released)

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